

Veterans and Family Support Bulletin #1

Hello everyone. I Hope your Year has come off to a good start. Supporting our Veterans and their Families is what we need to be doing and keep doing. They have sacrificed alot and when we are able to help them it's a great feeling.

When we started the year I sent a lot of papers out. Want to make sure that you have been able to look over them and if your Auxiliaries are using the Information to help the Veterans and their families. Hopefully you all got to Put the information out for Suicide prevention month in September. This will help get the information out to veterans, family and friends. Also there is Veteran & Military Suicide Awareness Teardrop Stickers. Use these as it will be a good talking point when people see them.

Our National Chairman has been putting out Blogs and I hope you have been able to read them. If not, Here is what she has put out so far.

"New Points of Focus

2025-2026 National Veterans & Family Support Ambassador Annie O'Connor

I'm so glad that our members are embracing the idea that a "Rising Tide Lifts All Veterans to Success" because no truer words have been spoken!

For my Program this year my main points of focus will be :

- VFW Based Veterans Assistance Programs
- Veterans Mental Health Issues
- Veteran and Veteran Spouses employment

The VFW has a plethora of ways to assist our veterans, their families and service members with their VA claims and benefits assistance

VFW Service Officers are trained professionals who help veterans navigate the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) system to secure the benefits they have earned. Services offered by these officers include:

- Case preparation
- Claims and appeals
- Transition support
- Advocacy

There's also the VFW's Financial Assistance Program for service members. The Financial Assistance for Service Members program is here to help America's active-duty service members (including activated Guard/Reserve members) and their families who have run into unexpected financial difficulties because of deployment or other military-related activity or injury.

This program provides financial assistance up to \$2,500 to assist daily necessities in the form of a grant – not a loan – so no repayment is required. To further ease the burden, the VFW pays the

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<https://www.vfw.org/assistance/financial-grants>

Veteran Students also have VFW Resources to include the VFW Student Veteran Support Grant and the VFW "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship." Check out all the detail about these opportunities at the link located here: <https://www.vfw.org/assistance/student-veterans-support>
Veterans Mental Health is of course a key component of everything we do in this Program. In order to easily point a veteran in the direction of help for dealing with the Veterans

Administration; keep the 988 number (or text 838255) handy after recognizing a veteran (or anyone for that matter) in crisis. Pressing option 1 will lead veterans to specialized assistance geared specifically for them. Learn the five signs of someone in trouble. You will never know how much a difference that you may make in someone's life!

Employment is vital to ensure that our veterans and their families are in the best possible shape, both financially and mentally! This also includes helping their spouse enter or reenter the job market. Work with your local employers, county and state to organize opportunities such as resume assistance, job fairs and training opportunities so that our veterans have the best chance at maximizing their earning potential. Their success will be returned tenfold to their communities!

Many of the tools to help with this can be located in MALTA here:

<https://malta.vfwauxiliary.org/MemberResources>

Members may contact me at any time either via email at auxambassadorannie@gmail.com or call/text at 912-655-2726. I look forward to hearing from you all!

And once again, never forget, "A Rising Tide Lifts all Veterans to Success"!

I know this email is long, but I would like for you to have all the information. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me. Let's remember "Gnome Veteran Forgotten"

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